

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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TBI SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES, BARRIERS TO SERVICES, SUPPORT

A statewide survey conducted last year highlights the health challenges and barriers to services and support for individuals who have experienced traumatic brain injuries.

Those who responded to the survey reported significant adverse changes to their lives resulting from a brain injury, most citing changes to their physical health, emotional well being and ability to earn an income. They also reported experiencing barriers that prevented or limited access to needed services and supports, such as a lack of financial resources, geographic and transportation issues and limited awareness of brain injury among professionals. Among the most important needs identified were cognitive training, counseling and behavioral support to address problems that occur daily as a result of an injury – problems affecting the individual who experienced a brain injury as well as their families.

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation and the Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council worked with the Brain Injury Association of Nebraska and Schmeckle Research, Inc., to conduct the Nebraska TBI Needs and Resources Assessment.

Researchers analyzed data from the Nebraska TBI Registry as well as surveys completed by individuals with brain injuries, their family members, service providers and state agencies. The survey also included information and data provided by focus groups, key informants and other sources.

According to a U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention formula for estimating the number of individuals living with traumatic brain injuries based on state populations, more than 36,500 Nebraska residents have brain injury related disabilities and the estimated cost to Nebraska in 2009 for fatal and nonfatal brain injuries, medical expenses and productivity losses totaled more than \$413.5 million. The incidence rate for emergency hospital visits was highest for children under 4 years of age and adults 85 and older. In 2009, the most frequent causes of a brain injury were falls, being struck by or against an object and motor vehicle accidents.

The Nebraska report details the service needs of individuals with brain injuries and their families. The report also describes existing services and support systems as well as service gaps and barriers.

The Nebraska TBI Advisory Council will use the data to promote awareness, develop training opportunities and to advise the Nebraska Department of Education, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in the implementation of a state plan aimed at providing systematic services for individuals and their families.

The report is available at the Nebraska Brain Injury Resource Network's website:
<http://www.braininjury.ne.gov/> and the Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation website:
<http://www.vocrehab.state.ne.us/>.

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